The Old House Guild of Sandusky

FALL 2026 NEWS FOR MEMBERS



Fall Care for a Historic Property

The Mission Statement of the Old House Guild is focused on preservation by various means. One of these is to accomplish our purpose through publications and our website. As we move into the fall it is a good time to share information on how to prepare historic properties for the coming winter. Here is an excellent checklist for your use as well as for sharing with neighbors.

For a Sandusky property near Lake Erie, plan for cold, wind, snow, ice, and repeated freezing and thawing. Finish weather-sensitive work before sustained freezing weather. Prioritize active leaks, unsafe conditions, and reliable heat; retain and repair sound historic materials.

Sandusky, Ohio | Keep water out and preserve original materials

1. Inspect the roof and clear the drainage system. [1]

Look from the ground for missing roofing, loose flashing, and damaged chimney caps. Check the attic for leak stains. Hire a roofer experienced with your roof material. Clear gutters, downspouts, and roof drains after leaf fall; correct leaks and sagging. Direct discharge away from foundations without creating icy walkways.

2. Examine masonry before freezing weather. [2]

Check brick, limestone, mortar joints, chimney masonry, and foundation walls for cracks, loose pieces, or flaking surfaces. Water entering damaged masonry can cause further deterioration when it freezes. Have a preservation mason assess repairs and match the existing mortar's strength, permeability, color, and joint finish. Avoid hard cement patches, abrasive cleaning, and waterproof coatings that trap moisture. Do not rush repointing into freezing conditions; arrange proper curing and weather protection.

3. Reduce drafts while keeping historic windows. [3]

Repair loose glazing putty, fit appropriate weatherstripping, and seal unintended gaps around frames. Install or repair well-fitting storm windows; preserve drainage openings and inspect for condensation. Interior storms may suit decorative windows. Check door sweeps, thresholds, locks, and storm doors. Keep operable windows usable for ventilation and escape. Repair original sash and doors before considering replacement.

4. Protect woodwork and painted surfaces. [4, 5]

Inspect sills, trim, siding, porch posts, and railings for peeling paint, soft wood, or open joints. Correct the moisture source before repainting. Make localized repairs and protect exposed wood when temperatures and drying conditions meet product instructions. Preserve sound paint rather than stripping entire surfaces. In pre-1978 buildings, evaluate lead-paint hazards before disturbing coatings and use lead-safe work practices or a qualified lead-safe contractor.

5. Check the basement, grounds, and attic. [1, 6]

Clear window wells and remove debris holding moisture against the building. Watch for ponding after rain. Review attic air leaks, insulation, and ventilation with someone familiar with older buildings. Keep vents clear; insulation and air sealing must respect moisture movement, historic finishes, and fire clearances. Investigate recurring ice dams rather than simply adding insulation.

6. Service heating equipment and test alarms. [7, 8]

Arrange annual professional inspection of the furnace or boiler, flues, chimney, and fireplace before heavy use. Change filters as specified and have system-specific controls checked. Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and replace batteries or expired units as instructed. Keep combustible items at least three feet from heat sources. Turn portable heaters off when leaving or sleeping. Never use an oven for heat; run generators outdoors, at least 20 feet from doors, windows, and vents.

7. Protect plumbing and plan for absences. [9]

Disconnect, drain, and store garden hoses. Shut off and drain outdoor faucet branches where designed to do so; follow instructions for frost-free faucets and irrigation equipment. Insulate vulnerable hot and cold pipes in unheated spaces. Locate and label the main water shutoff. During severe cold, keep temperatures steady, open sink cabinets where pipes need warmth, and let vulnerable faucets trickle as needed. When away, keep heat at least 55 F; exposed areas may need more protection. Arrange regular checks or temperature alerts. For an unheated building, have a plumber professionally winterize the plumbing and heating systems.

8. Prepare porches, paths, and outdoor features. [1]

Secure loose railings and storm windows. Store movable furnishings. Have hazardous branches assessed. Prepare a shovel or broom suitable for historic paving; avoid scraping stone or brick with metal blades. Favor sand for traction near masonry. Use any needed deicer sparingly and remove residue when surfaces dry.

9. Keep a record and confirm local review requirements. [1, 10]

Photograph concerns and keep a dated repair list, contractor information, and receipts. Before changing designated historic features, check with Sandusky Planning staff about Landmark

Commission review and permits. Ask which repairs qualify for administrative review. Obtain preservation advice before replacing windows, roofing, masonry, or decorative details.

Suggested fall schedule: Early fall: inspect and book specialists. Before freezing weather: complete suitable repairs, service heat, and drain outdoor plumbing. After leaf fall: clean gutters again. During winter: check for leaks, ice buildup, and heating problems after storms; keep emergency contacts and shutoff information accessible.

Sources and further reading

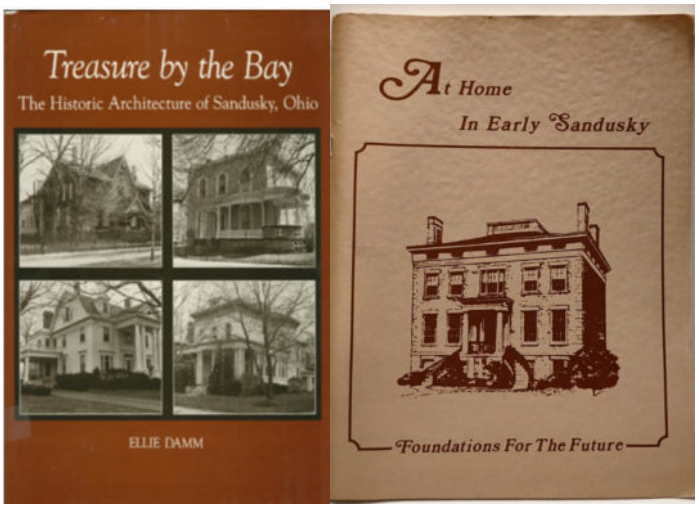
1. NPS, Preservation Brief 47: Exterior Maintenance | 2. NPS, Common Problems with Brick Masonry 3. NPS, Weatherization: Windows and Doors | 4. NPS, Preservation Brief 10: Exterior Paint 5. EPA, Lead-Safe Renovations for DIYers | 6. ENERGY STAR, Attic Ventilation 7. USFA, Heating Fire Safety | 8. USFA, Carbon Monoxide Prevention 9. American Red Cross, Frozen Pipes | 10. Sandusky Code, Section 1161.07 Local forecasts: National Weather Service Cleveland

Looking for Book Donations

We are looking for members who would be willing to donate their copies of two books that we could keep to help us in our preservation work. We would like multiple copies of the following:

Treasure by the Bay, by Ellie Damm

At Home In Early Sandusky, by Helen M. Hanson



If you are willing to part with your copy or purchase one for donation to the Guild, please let us know!

Contact: Tim Berkey
832-215-3077
timothy.berkey@gmail.com

Thank you!



Message from OHG Board President

Dr. Timothy Berkey



Mission of the Old House Guild

To promote historic preservation and the restoration of significant buildings, houses, sites, and objects in the Sandusky, Ohio area. To encourage the rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of such properties. To accomplish these purposes by means of meetings, publications, surveys, and tours. To act as a non-profit organization and to apply for any grants that may be appropriate to further the cause of historic preservation.

In Praise of Board Members

As we approach our largest event of the year I want to take the opportunity to thank our board members for all of their hands on, year around work behind the scenes. Our Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes is a good example. Think about all of the tasks that must be completed absent the actual date of this event. A committee of board members travel throughout the community investigating properties that will provide an interesting and worthwhile experience for participants. In addition, a home base location must be identified. Ticket sales require work with our technology and deliveries that are easy and effective for people. We provide both online and in person purchase opportunities. Then there is advertising the event to a broad market area made up of numerous counties. We solicit donations for our raffle items. Many of you are contacted to volunteer for the tour. Okay, you get the point. And that's just for one of several events throughout the year! Yes, we are very thankful for our member volunteers and appreciate you help. At the same time I encourage all of us to say thank you to our trustees for many hours of time in providing wonderful experiences. Well done!

Welcome New Board Member Lisa Yako

We are pleased to announce that Lisa Yako will serve as our 10th member of the Old House Guild Board of Trustees. We asked Lisa to provide an introduction of herself to the membership. Congratulations Lisa. We look forward to your ideas and contributions.





I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on the Board of the Old House Guild (OHG). My appreciation of historic houses began when my parents purchased a lovely, 1905 home on Kelleys Island in 1984. In 1997, my husband, Brad Blackwell, and I moved from Massachusetts and settled in Huron. In 1998, we purchased a century home in Huron's Old Plat neighborhood. This home had charm, but it had been a rental for 22 years. We had no idea what we were doing, but over 27 years, we lovingly renovated the home, respecting its history and original components. We also raised our children there.

After a few years of living in our home, I grew curious about its true age and the people who had called it home before us. My research revealed that our home was built in 1883 by a woman, whom I soon discovered was a run-away wife! She was quite the rebel for 1883- this is a whole story in itself! I enjoyed the experience of researching my home's history so much that I started a business doing this for others. Over the years, I provided home histories for clients from Catawba Island to Gates Mills and taught many people how to research their home for themselves. In addition, I am proud to have worked to have McCormick School in Huron and The Old Stone House in Berlin Heights listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

My deep interest in houses, historic architecture, and the history of the people associated with these buildings led me to begin a new career as a realtor in 2018. I am always excited when I work with buyers who are interested in purchasing a historic home. I have completed a house history as a gift for several clients.

I look forward to working with the OHG to further their mission of preservation, restoration, and adaptive use of Sandusky's historic structures. Knowing the history of each of these structures gives us a true connection to the past and benefits our future.

Preservation Committee

Mary Truko, Chair Betsy Berkey Tim Berkey



Central to the mission of the Old House Guild is our work to preserve historic buildings, homes, sites and objects. As we look back on 2026, we have engaged in several initiatives to support these aims. We began the year with our recognition of property owners at our annual meeting in May. Their work provided the community with a broad variety of examples that exemplify

preservation of the rich history of architecture in the Sandusky Community. In addition we worked with the Lodges of the Masonic Temple along with the Dorn Foundation to seek funding towards critical roof replacement of the historic property. And at this time of year we are identifying and finalizing our list of properties to be recognized for various preservation work next spring.

In addition we are working with the Perseverance and Science Lodges to apply for a historic marker plaque for the Temple as well as assist in the application for the structure to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. We are finalizing the initial paperwork by completing a preliminary questionnaire that answers why the property is worth of consideration. A brief history of the Masonic Temple has been provided to us. Here are some excerpts taken directly from the Masonic Archives that make the case worthy of consideration of recognition:

The Original Structure

The ground on which it stands at the corner of Washington and Wayne Streets and Huron Avenue was once occupied by a row of low buildings formerly known to Sanduskians as the "Hubbard Squash." The change was vast. Mr.Henry Lindsay of Zanesville, the architect, planned a modern structure and Messrs. A Feick & Bro. the contractors, completed the job.

The architecture is modern, the Romanesque features predominating, the style also partaking of the Ionic and Grecian. The entrance is the Roman arch and some very clever carving adorns the front. The material used on the two fronts is Amherst buff and blue sandstone. The rear walls are built of Sandusky blue limestone. The cost of the structure, including grounds and furniture, was $60,000.

1925 Redesign

In 1925 the Board of Directors employed the architect C. Edward Wolfe of Sandusky to redesign the third floor Lodge Room area. The purpose of the change was to make the Lodge Room more in demand for social events and make the room more fitting for the solemnity of the Masonic work. The stage area was changed and the changes to the room enlarged the seating area for viewing and participating in the Degree Work. The enhanced room greatly contributed to the conferring of the Degrees and understanding the teachings of the lessons contained therein.

1942 Fire

On the night of January 15, 1943 at 11:15 pm a fire call was received that the Masonic Temple was on fire. When the fire companies arrived on the scene the fire had made great headway and was not under control until 3:00 a.m. The temperature was far below freezing and the building became covered in ice from the water used in extinguishing the blaze.

The Temple was rebuilt but the second floor was lost. The many faceted and beautiful roof was replaced with a mostly flat roof. The previous second floor was eliminated and the parapet around the roof was drastically changed. There was a war to fight and materials were short in supply.

On September 16, 1944 the Temple was rededicated.

From Ellie Damm's *Treasure by the Bay . . .*

Science Lodge No. 50 F & AM was chartered in 1819. The first master, Hector Kilbourne platted the city and laid out the streets in the pattern of the Masonic emblem of the square and compass laying on an open Bible. Of buff sandstone and blue limestone, the irregular shape of this Second Romanesque-Revival building conforms to the irregular shape of its lot. Stone cornices and parapets have indented stone panels. The arched stone over the main entry has multicolumn pilasters set in massive stone.

During the coming year the Preservation Committee and the Guild will be assisting the Lodges in the following:

1. Seeking funding for the replacement of the roof
2. Completing the application for a historic marker plaque
3. Preparing the application for placement on the National Register of Historic Places

As always, if you see or hear of preservation work in the community for recognition. And, if you are aware of historic properties, homes, or objects that need our attention, please give us a call or send us an email.

Check out our ongoing gallery of pictures from recent OHG events on our expanded website:
https://www.oldhouseguild.org/events/

Events Committee

Linda Howell Mary Truka Suzanne Stuck

Even though the days are getting shorter and there's a chill in the air the events team is constantly looking forward to warmer weather in 2027.

We spent one day snooping through alleys, going extremely slow past properties, casing homes out repeatedly, and if we were lucky enough to find a property owner out- - - invited ourselves in to check out their yards. When you have access to a golf cart it allows you the opportunity to get up close and personal! We are happy to report that our mission was accomplished and we have our garden list for next year 80% set in stone.

This might be a bit early but we have a couple of dates we'd like you to note when preparing your 2027 calendar. **Thursday, May 13th** will be our **annual dinner** and **Sunday, June 27th** will be the **garden tour**. More information will be coming in the winter and spring editions of the newsletter. Over the winter months we'd like to plan a How To Seminar or a visit to a historic local property that is under construction or recently completed, so stay tuned.

If you would like to serve on our committee or any of the other planning committees please let one of our officers know. Remember, it's not all work. We do have fun working together for the good of our organization.

From the Editor . . .
Betsy Berkey

The Old House Guild of Sandusky
1978-2028

That's right. Just around the corner we will be celebrating 50 years of the Old House Guild. This all began with a woman with and a vision . . .

Ellie Damm



Photo added by D'Anna Rotsinger Nemitz

A Legacy of Preservation

1924-2013 | Founder and First President The Old House Guild of Sandusky

Ellie Damm helped give Sandusky a lasting gift: an organized commitment to protecting the buildings that tell its story. The founder and first president of the Old House Guild of Sandusky, Ellie brought together citizens willing to work for the preservation of their community. Her achievements deserve recognition both for the historic places they helped safeguard and for the example of civic responsibility they continue to offer.

In 1978, Damm and a group of concerned residents founded the Guild in response to the threatened loss of Sandusky's architectural heritage. Its purpose embraced preservation, restoration, and the adaptive use of historic buildings, houses, sites, and objects. The organization gave citizens a way to turn concern into coordinated action and made the care of old buildings a shared community undertaking.

The Guild began with meetings in the homes of founding board members. That modest beginning is an important part of its history: the effort to preserve Sandusky's houses first took shape within the homes of people prepared to accept responsibility for the work. Two founding board members continue their service today: Mary Truka, Chair of the Preservation Committee, and Jack Mineo, Trustee Emeritus. Their continued involvement connects the Guild's beginnings with its present mission.

Damm soon helped establish a foundation for that mission through research. In 1979, she coordinated an inventory that placed 1,457 Sandusky buildings on the Ohio Historic Inventory, according to her publisher's biographical account. The Guild later reported more than 100 successful National Register applications, including two historic districts. These achievements reflect the combined work of Damm and the volunteers she helped organize.

An inventory may sound like a quiet accomplishment, but its importance is considerable. Recording historic places makes their significance easier to understand and gives future preservation efforts a body of evidence to draw upon. Damm's contribution joined appreciation with documentation. That combination remains a strong reason to honor her: she helped make Sandusky's architectural inheritance something the community could identify, study, and care for together.

Her work also brought preservation knowledge to the community. The Guild's memorial account credits her with coordinating a National Trust for Historic Preservation workshop in 1980, a follow-up clinic in 1981, and a Preservation Office tax workshop in 1982. She also chaired the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board for years. These responsibilities extended her contribution beyond Sandusky and demonstrate the breadth of her commitment.

For nine years, Damm led the Guild's annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of

Homes. The tour offered a welcoming way for the public to encounter historic houses and appreciate their character. Her leadership also helped bring the Guild local, state, and national recognition. The tour and the educational programs show the range of her work: she helped create opportunities for people to enjoy old buildings as well as learn how to preserve them.

Damm made another enduring contribution through her 1989 book, Treasure by the Bay: The Historic Architecture of Sandusky, Ohio. Using words and pictures, she explored the city's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architecture, including buildings constructed of native limestone. The book describes architectural details, original owners, and, where known, architects and builders. It offers readers a way to look more closely at familiar streets and to recognize the history carried by individual buildings.

Her legacy continued after her death in 2013. The Guild's rescue of the Johnson House, acquired in 2019 and subsequently returned to private ownership for restoration, illustrates the continuing value of the organization she helped establish.

Ellie Damm deserves the gratitude of a community whose history is still visible in its buildings. Her lasting accomplishment was to help organize people around the care of those places and to leave useful records for those who would follow. The early home meetings, the inventory, the tours, the workshops, and her book form a remarkable record of service. Through the Guild and the continuing commitment of its members, including Mary Truka and Jack Mineo, that record remains an invitation to participate. Honoring Ellie means carrying the work forward: caring for historic buildings, valuing their stories, and keeping Sandusky's distinctive heritage available to future generations.

Got ideas for celebrating our 50th Anniversary?
Send us your suggestions!



2026 Candlelight Tour of Homes

Ed Stout **Laurie Hille** **Suzanne Stuck** **Betsy Berkey**
Chair

Christmas Candlelight Tour
Sunday, December 6
3:30-8:30 pm

The Old House Guild's Annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes for 2026 has undergone a few changes. First, the tour will be a one-day event instead of the previous two-day event in past years. Having examined the past attendance numbers, whether the event was on Sunday/Monday, or Saturday/Sunday, Sunday was always the most attended of the two days. Thus the tour committee decided on a Sunday only offering for the tour. To accomplish this change and to accommodate the request for some daylight hours, the tour has expanded to 5 hours from **3:30pm till 8:30pm.** So mark your calendars now for **Sunday, December 6th** as the date of our tour.

The location of our tour's base will be at the Weber Building at 414 Wayne Street owned by Andy Weber and Christine Parthemore. This will be the location to buy tour tickets in person the day of the tour if you have not purchased your tickets early. It will also be the location to purchase your

raffle chances for wreaths, the 50/50, and our newly added holiday dining package. We will have carolers plus Santa and Mrs.Claus to delight both young and old. You will also be able to purchase donuts and hot chocolate from a vendor wagon located just outside the Weber Building. We will offer our mystery item hunt contest again where you enter your guess of the item via email to us. The winner will receive a $50 prize for naming the item and home where it is located. We will offer clues as to what the item is on our website.

Our selection of tour locations this year are:

Weber Building at 414 Wayne Street

Harlequins Coach House Theater (behind the Weber)

Follett House Museum next door at 404 Wayne Street

Chapel of Oakland Cemetery at 2917 Milan Road

Paula Coker residence at 328 Fulton Street

Gregg Mello & Christopher MacKenzie residence at 733 Wayne Street

Anne and Jim McGookey residence at 311 46th Street

Residence at 402 46th Street

Tickets are available now online via our website, or if you prefer purchasing in person, ticket sales begin on Monday, November 16th. Locations for all those selling locations will be listed on our website very soon. We are excited about our tour for 2026, its offerings, new features and changes. We hope you will have a wonderful experience. We look orward to seeing you all on December 6th!

Want to Donate to the Old House Guild?

Very easy to do! Use your phone and scan our QR code at the left. It is also located on our website. Or you can also write a check made out to the Old House Guild. You can also use a credit card. Thank you for your generous contributions!



From the Editor

Betsy Berkey

Thank you for the positive feedback regarding our newsletter. Our goal is to provide you with information about current Guild initiatives, upcoming activities, and most important, plans to keep us focused on our important work of preservation. Each quarter we ask the chairs and officers to submit articles to accomplish this. In addition, I reach out to others who can contribute interesting stories that I hope you find worthy of reading.

Please know that we enjoy hearing from our members. If you have something interesting about the history of the city or the Guild that you would like to share, email me if you are willing to submit an article. And even if you are uncomfortable writing, you can jot down some notes or call and story-tell. I'll take it from there and work with you on a piece that shares your story!

Betsy Berkey – betsy.w.berkey@gmail.com 440-796-2185

Note: we now post all past and present newsletters on our website so if you want to go back and read issues, they are there for your use.

Not Getting Your Newsletter?



If you have not been receiving your newsletter or hear from a fellow member who states the same please do the following before you contact us:

> Iphone/Apple users – check your Junk file, open up an email from the Guild and you will be now able to get our messages and news. Android users – check your Spam file, open up an email from the Guild and you will now be able to get our messages and news.
> **Don't forget to send us your new email address when/if it changes!**

Volunteer with the Old House Guild

Opportunities

Tour Guide	Fundraising	Event Helper
Committee Volunteer	Historic Research	Sign Painter
Historic Inventory	Holiday Decorating	Mailings
Candlelight Tour Helper	Annual Dinner Helper	Membership

And if you have any other talent to share in our organization, please let us know by calling or emailing us at the contacts listed below.

How to Contact Us

Board of Trustee Members:

President – Timothy Berkey	timothy.berkey@oldhouseguild.org
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